

Remarks

Claims 1-7, 9-12, 23, 24, 26-30 and 34-36 are pending in the application and were rejected. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended and claims 5 and 35 have been cancelled. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 23, 24, 26-30 and 35 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of claim 35 and intervening claim 5. Consequently, Applicants believe amended claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5, 9-12, 34 and 36 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,082,817 issued to Müller (hereinafter “Müller ‘817”). Applicants believe this rejection has been rendered moot by the amendment discussed above.

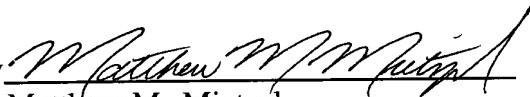
Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Müller ‘817. Applicants believe this rejection has been rendered moot by the amendment discussed above.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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